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Economic Intelligence Report

INTRA-BLOC
AND INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS
OF THE SINO-SOVIET BLOC
1950-65

(SUPPLEMENT)



CIA/RR ER 62-9

April 1962

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INTRA-BLOC AND INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS
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I. Planned Intra-Bloc and International Semiautomatic Telephone System

The USSR and the European Satellites, along with Yugoslavia, intend to establish a semiautomatic (operator distance dialing) and later a fully automatic (subscriber distance dialing) long-distance telephone network that will interconnect the capital cities of all the European Communist countries with one another and with the capitals of most of the remaining countries of Europe. The network was first proposed at a meeting in December 1957 of the Organization for Cooperation Among the Socialist Countries in the Fields of Post and Communications (OSS)** in Moscow. 2/ At this meeting, attended by the ministers of communications of the various countries of the Soviet Bloc*** and Yugoslavia, Resolution No. 7 was drafted calling for the preparation of a plan for the proposed telephone network. Two additional meetings, one in Prague in 1958 and one in Budapest in 1960, established the general concept of the network and delegated to Czechoslovakia the primary responsibility for preparing "technical conditions." Specifications were to be submitted for approval to the OSS and then to the Chairman of Section 9 of CEMA by March 1961. 3/

At the OSS meeting in June 1961 in Prague, the plan for routing of telephone traffic over the semiautomatic telephone network was submitted and approved. 4/ The suggestions and opinions of the USSR, Hungary, East Germany, and Poland were incorporated in the plan submitted by Czechoslovakia. Although completion of the semiautomatic network originally was planned for 1963, an extension of the completion date to 1964 was allowed. The original planned completion dates for each country are given in Appendix A. The fully automatic network will be completed in approximately 10 years.

* The estimates and conclusions in this report represent the best judgment of this Office as of 1 March 1962.

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*** For the purposes of this report the Soviet Bloc encompasses the USSR, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Rumania.

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The semiautomatic network, as approved, will encompass the following:

1. Both direct and alternate routing will be employed. 5/
2. Flexible switching between transit centers will be available. 6/
3. On all direct routes an allowance of 10 percent additional capacity will be made available -- 5 percent for alternate routing and 5 percent for emergency routing. 7/
4. Preselection of alternate routes will be established. 8/
5. Twelve-telephone channel carrier-frequency equipment will be utilized. 9/
6. Standards of the International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee (CCITT) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) will be observed. 10/
7. Crossbar telephone exchange equipment will be employed.

The fully automatic network, to be completed in about 10 years, will incorporate "contactless" (electronic) telephone exchanges utilizing high-frequency transistors and semiconductors in the then operational semiautomatic network. 11/ Problems in research and development, however, have so far prevented the setting of a specific date for the completion of the fully automatic network.

Transmission facilities to be employed in the network will include microwave radio relay, multiconductor and coaxial cable, and open wire lines. 12/ Specifications for the use of particular facilities on specific routes are not now known.

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When completed, the planned semiautomatic and later fully automatic telephone network will improve substantially the exchange of telephone traffic among countries of the Soviet Bloc and between these countries and the other areas of Europe. Furthermore, the transmission facilities that this network will use provide substantially more capacity on many routes than that needed strictly for international telephone service. This additional capacity probably will be used for international telegraph* and other telecommunications services as well as for domestic service.

II. International Radiobroadcasting and Television Organization (OIRT)

The OIRT is an organization dominated by the Soviet Bloc that effects cooperation among the Bloc and some non-Bloc member countries in the field of radiobroadcasting and television.** An outgrowth of the International Broadcasting Organization (OIR),*** the OIRT considers problems of common concern to its members and sponsors cooperative action for their solution. Through its technical, program, and television commissions it recommends operating standards and procedures. It also encourages the exchange of information among member countries. The OIRT cooperates with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU); the EBU; the United Nations Economic, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and the International Film and Television Council. 15/

One of the most important actions taken by the OIRT thus far has been the approval in January 1960 of the establishment of a Bloc-wide television network to be known as "Intervision." Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, and Hungary were the initial members of Intervision, followed shortly thereafter by the USSR. Bulgaria and Rumania are expected to join sometime in 1962, and it is anticipated that the Far Eastern members of OIRT will eventually participate in Intervision. It has been the intention since the beginning that Intervision would exchange live television programs with Eurovision, the Western European television network sponsored by the EBU. Although more than 200 live programs have been exchanged between the two networks since April 1961, the majority have involved only Czechoslovakia and East Germany on the OIRT side. The growth of television transmitters and receivers in OIRT member countries during the period 1951-60 is summarized in the chart, Figure 5.[†] 16/

* As many as 24 sixty-word-per-minute teletype channels can be derived from 1 telephone channel.

** Finland, Iraq, Egypt (UAR), Cuba, and Mali are the non-Bloc members of the OIRT.

*** The OIR was originally formed in 1946 and had a membership of 28 European countries. As the USSR and other member countries from the Bloc began to use the organization for political purposes, however, all non-Bloc countries except Finland withdrew and formed the European Broadcasting Union (EBU).

[†] Following p. 4.

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Two factors have limited the scope of Intervision to date -- the relatively slow development of television in the more underdeveloped countries of the Bloc and the limited transmission facilities available for exchanging live programs across national borders. Although intra-Bloc and international microwave radio relay and coaxial cable facilities capable of carrying television programs are now being introduced, it will be some years, probably not before 1965, before planned networks will be sufficiently completed to enable the full interchange of television programs among all OIRT member countries and between all OIRT and EBU members.

III. Implications

The basic report to which this report is a supplement treated in some detail the rather ambitious plans of the Soviet Bloc to build integrated networks of telecommunications during the 1959-65 period. These networks, employing modern technologies, are intended to carry telephone, telegraph, television, and newer services such as data signals. The intra-Bloc networks, additionally, are intended to interconnect with similar facilities in adjacent countries, especially in Western Europe. To achieve this end in the easiest manner, the technical parameters of the network adhere to international (ITU/CCITT) standards.

There are clear indications that these plans are in fact being implemented. The intra-Bloc semiautomatic telephone network now being built probably will be completed by 1964. At the same time, the Intervision television network is being extended section by section. The evidence also is clear that when the transmission lines for these networks are built, facilities will be included for international connections as well.

It is concluded from this performance that the Bloc was indeed serious in intention when it formulated these ambitious plans. The intra-Bloc facilities certainly will aid in the achievement of tighter cohesion between the countries of the Bloc in the conduct of their mutual affairs. The provision of international connections to these facilities seems to show patently that the Bloc expects to increase its communications with the outside world, especially Western Europe.

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APPENDIX A

COMPLETION DATES FOR EXCHANGES AND CIRCUITS IN THE PLANNED INTRA-BLOC
AND INTERNATIONAL SEMIAUTOMATIC TELEPHONE NETWORK
OF THE SOVIET BLOC a/

<u>Semiautomatic Telephone Exchanges</u>			<u>International Telephone Circuits</u>	
<u>Country</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Year b/</u>	<u>Connection c/</u>	<u>Year b/</u>
USSR	Moscow	1962	To all countries	1961/62
Poland	Warsaw	1963	To Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark	Already completed for manual operation
			To all remaining countries	1962/63
East Germany	East Berlin	1963	To all countries	1963
Czechoslovakia	Prague	1963	To all countries	1963
Hungary	Budapest	1963	To East Germany, Poland, USSR, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, and Switzerland	1961
			To France, West Germany, Austria, and Holland	1962
			To Bulgaria, Rumania, and Yugoslavia	1963
Rumania	Bucharest	1963	To all countries	1963
Bulgaria	Sofia	1963	To all countries	1963

a. 17/

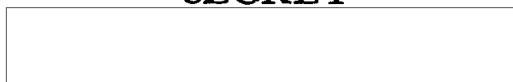
b. As the OSS gave a 1-year extension from 1963 to 1964 for completion of the over-all network, it is probable that some of the completion dates shown above have been changed.

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